



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on IED Incidents in Georgia

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 2, 2009

Madam Chairwoman,

The United States condemns the March 29 serial improvised explosive device (IED) attacks near Dvani, in which one Georgian policeman was killed and at least six others were wounded. According to initial investigations, the first device was detonated by a trip wire, which was set without apparent regard for the possible loss of civilian life. The second device was detonated by remote control and seems to have been designed to maximize casualties among the first responders, in this case the Georgian police. Two other unexploded devices apparently were also found at the site.

We agree fully with Special Representative Christopoulos and the Head of the EU Monitoring Mission, Ambassador Haber, that attacks such as this one are highly destabilizing and must be thoroughly investigated. Those responsible must be held accountable for their actions.

Incidents like these, as well as almost daily reports of firing or explosions in the zone of conflict, underscore the need for uninhibited access by international monitors to the whole of Georgia, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It is not tenable to argue that monitoring should take place only on one side of the administrative boundary line.

Together with robust international monitoring, implementation of the joint incident prevention and response mechanisms that were agreed in Geneva can provide greater transparency, deter violence, ensure the safety and protection of civilians, promote respect for human rights, and further the implementation of the August 12 and September 8 agreements. We therefore call on Russia to encourage the Abkhaz and South Ossetian participants to name their representatives to these mechanisms immediately.

We urge the participants to implement as well the recommendations of the November 2008 ODIHR/HCNM human rights assessment mission report, and call for an urgent follow-up assessment to ascertain the current human rights conditions in the South Ossetia region of Georgia.

We also call on Russia to ensure the rule of law and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law are upheld in those areas of Georgia where Russian military forces are present.

Like other delegations, we are convinced the OSCE has played and can continue to play a vital role in restoring stability and promoting human rights and democratic governance in Georgia. We welcome the Chairmanship's constructive proposal to allow the OSCE to continue its important work in South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia without violating any OSCE participating State's redlines regarding South Ossetia's political status. We urge all

delegations to work with the Chairmanship in a spirit of good will and collaboration to reach agreement as soon as possible on the basis of this proposal.

The United States will continue to support Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and will help in all ways to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.